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SUFFERINGS OF THE BATTLE-FIELD.

BY PROFESSOR UPHAM.

BATTLE OF BORODINO.

Of the books with which we are acquainted, one of the best calculated to give an impression of the immediate evils of war, distinct and vivid,—an impression corresponding in some degree to the reality,—is Labaume's Narrative of the Campaign in Russia. There were two hundred and sixty thousand soldiers present at the battle of Borodino, nearly all of whom were engaged in it. In the two armies, there were two hundred pieces of cannon, and, according to some accounts, a much greater number, constantly employed; and forty thousand dragoons, crossing the field in every direction, rode over bodies of the lifeless and the wounded, and dyed the hoofs of their horses in human blood. The battle commenced on the seventh of September, at six o'clock in the morning, and continued till night. The loss in both armies has been estimated at eighty thousand. Labaume gives an account of what fell under his notice the day after the battle: "In traversing the elevated plain, on which we had fought, we were enabled to form an estimate of the immense loss that had been sustained by the Russians. A surface of about nine miles in extent was covered with the killed and wounded, with the wreck of arms, lances, helmets, and cuirasses, and with balls as numerous as hailstones after a violent storm. In many places, the bursting of shells had overturned men and horses; and such was the havoc occasioned by repeated discharges, that mountains of

dead bodies were raised. But the most dreadful spectacle was the interior of the ravines, where the wounded had instinctively crawled to avoid the shot: here these unfortunate wretches, lying one upon another, destitute of assistance, and weltering in their blood, uttered the most horrid groans; loudly invoking death, they besought us to put an end to their excruciating torments. As our medical means of relief were insufficient, our fruitless compassion could only lament the calamities inseparable from a war so atrocious."

On his return with the retreating army from Moscow, this writer gives us another glimpse of the same field of battle. "My consternation was at its height on finding, near Borodino, the twenty thousand men, who had been slaughtered there, lying where they fell. The half-buried carcasses of men and horses covered the plain, intermingled with garments stained with blood, and bones gnawed by the dogs and birds of prey, and with the fragments of arms, drums, helmets, cuirasses."

"As we were marching over the field of battle, we heard at a distance a pitiable object, who demanded our assistance. Touched by his plaintive cries, many of the soldiers drew near the spot, when, to their great astonishment, they observed a French soldier stretched on the ground, with both his legs broken. 'I was wounded,' said he 'on the day of the great battle, and, finding myself in a lonely place, where I could gain no assistance, I dragged myself to the brink of a rivulet, and have lived near two months on grass and roots, and on some pieces of bread which I found amongst the dead bodies. At night, I have lain in the carcasses of dead horses, and with the flesh of these animals have dressed my wounds as well as with the best medicines. Having observed you at a distance, I collected all my strength, and have advanced sufficiently near to make myself heard.' Whilst we expressed our surprise at the event, a general, who was made acquainted with a case as singular as it was affecting, ordered him to be placed in his own carriage."

RETURN OF THE FRENCH FROM MOSCOW.

It is from such circumstantial details as we find in this account, that we become acquainted with the miseries actually endured by the French in their retreat from Moscow. "Overwhelmed," says this writer in another place, "by the whirlwinds of snow which assailed him, the soldier could no longer distinguish the main road from the ditches, and often fell into

the latter, which served for a tomb. Others, eager to press forward, dragged themselves along with pain; badly clothed and shod, having nothing to eat or drink, groaning, and shivering with cold, they gave no assistance, neither showed any signs of compassion to those who, sinking from weakness, expired around them.

“Many of these miserable creatures, dying from exhaustion, struggled hard in the agonies of death. Some of them, in the most affecting manner, bade adieu to their brethren and companions in arms; others, with their last sigh, pronounced the name of their mother, and of the country which gave them birth. The rigor of the cold benumbed their stiffened limbs, and soon reached their vitals. Stretched on the road, we could only see the heaps of snow that covered them, and that formed undulations in our route like those in a grave-yard. Flocks of ravens, abandoning the plains to take shelter in the neighboring woods, croaked ominously as they flew over our heads; and troops of dogs, which had followed us from Moscow, and lived solely on our bloody remains, howled around us, as if desirous of hastening the moment when we were to become their prey.”

At the retreat of the French from Liadoui, in Lithuania, the town, as seems to have been the common practice in this savage war, was set on fire. “Amongst the burning houses were three large barns filled with poor soldiers, chiefly wounded. They could not escape from two of these without passing through the one in front, which was on fire. The most active saved themselves by leaping out of the windows; but all those who were sick or crippled, not having strength to move, saw the flames advancing rapidly to devour them. Touched by their shrieks, some, who were less hardened, endeavored in vain to save them: we could only see them half-buried under the burning rafters: through whirlwinds of smoke, they entreated their comrades to shorten their sufferings by depriving them of life, and, from motives of humanity, we thought it our duty to comply with their wishes. As there were some who, notwithstanding, still survived, we heard them, with feeble voices, crying, ‘*Fire on us! fire on us! at the head! at the head! do not miss!*’ These heart-rending cries did not cease till the whole were consumed.”

PASSAGE OF THE BEREZINA.

Before the French had completed the passage of the river Berezina, the Russians made a furious attack upon their rear-guard. "In the heat of the engagement, many balls fell on the miserable crowd that for three days had been pressing round the bridge, and even some shells burst in the midst of them. Terror and despair then took possession of every heart anxious for self-preservation; women and children, who had escaped so many disasters, seemed to have been preserved to experience a death still more deplorable. Leaving their carriages, they ran to embrace the knees of the first person they met, and implored him with tears to take them to the other side. The sick and wounded, seated on the trunk of a tree, or supported on crutches, looked eagerly for some friend that could assist them; but their cries were lost in the air; every one thought only of his own safety.

"On seeing the enemy, those who had not crossed, mingling with the Poles, rushed toward the bridge; artillery, baggage, cavalry, and infantry, all endeavoring to pass first. The strong threw into the water the weak who impeded their advance, and trampled under foot the sick and wounded whom they found in their way. Many hundreds were crushed under the wheels of the artillery; others, who had hoped to save themselves by swimming, were frozen in the river, or perished by slipping from the ice. Thousands and thousands of hopeless victims, notwithstanding these sorrowful examples, threw themselves into the Berezina, where they nearly all perished in convulsions of grief and despair.

"The division of Girard succeeded by force of arms in overcoming all the obstacles that retarded their march, and, scaling the mountain of dead bodies that obstructed the road, gained the opposite shore, where the Russians would have followed them if they had not immediately set fire to the bridge.

"Many of those who were left on the other bank, with the prospect of the most horrible death, attempted to cross the bridge through the flames; but midway they threw themselves into the river to avoid being burnt. At length, the Russians having made themselves masters of the field of battle, our troops retired; the passage of the river ceased, and the most tremendous uproar was succeeded by a deathlike silence."

Let those who have been accustomed to merge the suffer-

ings of individuals in those vague and indefinite views which we take of suffering when contemplated in the mass, notice the following passage: "The road was covered with soldiers, who no longer retained the human form, and whom the enemy disdained to take prisoners. Every day furnished scenes too painful to relate. Some had lost their hearing, others their speech, and many, by excessive cold and hunger, were reduced to such a state of stupid frenzy, that they roasted the dead bodies for food, and even gnawed their own hands and arms. Some, who were too weak to lift a piece of wood, or to roll a stone towards the fire, sat down upon their dead companions, and, with an unmoved countenance, gazed upon the burning logs. When they were consumed, these livid spectres, unable to get up, fell by those on whom they had been seated. Many, in a state of mental alienation, in order to warm themselves, plunged their bare feet into the fire; some, with a convulsive laugh, threw themselves into the flames, and uttering shocking cries, perished in the most horrible contortions; others, in a state of equal madness, followed their example, and shared the same fate!"

SIEGE OF MAGDEBURG.

But some will say, perhaps, that these battles and this retreat were extraordinary, out of the common course, something unheard of before; and that they give an exaggerated and erroneous idea of the miseries attendant upon war; but, so far as we are able to learn, this suggestion does not appear to be sustained by the facts of history. From the earliest periods of the human race, there have been wars, and series of wars, continued for years, and almost for generations, that have been marked from beginning to end with inexpressible sufferings, and with the most dreadful atrocities,—such as the second Punic war; the war which terminated in the destruction of Jerusalem; the recent war of the Greek revolution; the wars, civil and foreign, of the French revolution; the recent wars in Spanish South America; some of the wars between Russia and Turkey, and Russia and Poland; the early revolutionary wars of the Dutch republic; the wars of the invasion of Spain by Bonaparte; the so called thirty years' war, which involved almost all Europe, and was signalized by the death of Gustavus Adolphus. In the dreadful war last mentioned, the city of Magdeburg, in Prussia, was taken by assault by the imperial commander, count de Tilly; and here are some of the re-

sults:—"Before noon, all the works were carried, and the town was in the hands of the enemy. Two gates were now opened by the besiegers for the entrance of the army, and Tilly marched part of his infantry into the town. He immediately occupied the principal streets, and, with pointed cannon, drove the citizens into their dwellings, there to await their destiny. They were not long held in suspense: a word from Tilly decided the fate of Magdeburg.

"Even a more humane general would have vainly attempted to restrain such soldiers; but Tilly never once made the attempt. The silence of their general left the soldiery masters of the lives of the citizens; and they broke without restraint into the houses to gratify every brutal appetite. The prayers of innocence excited some compassion in the hearts of the Germans, but none in the rude breasts of Pappenheim's Walloons. Scarcely had the massacre commenced, when the other gates were thrown open, and the cavalry, with the fearful hordes of the Croats, poured in upon the devoted town.

"And now began a scene of carnage which history has no language, poetry no pencil, to portray. Neither the innocence of childhood, nor the helplessness of old age,—neither youth, sex, rank, nor beauty,—could disarm the fury of the conquerors. Wives were dishonored in the arms of their husbands, daughters at the feet of their parents; and the defenceless sex exposed to the double sacrifice of virtue and life. No condition, however obscure, or however sacred, could afford protection from the rapacity of the enemy. Fifty-three women were found beheaded in a single church. The Croats amused themselves with throwing children into the flames; Pappenheim's Walloons with stabbing infants at their mothers' breast. Some officers of the League, horror-struck at this dreadful scene, ventured to remind Tilly that he had it in his power to stop the carnage. 'Return in an hour,' was his answer, 'and I shall see what is to be done; the soldier must have some recompense for his danger and toils.' These horrors lasted without abatement, till at last the smoke and flames stopped the course of the plunderers. To increase the confusion, and break the resistance of the inhabitants, the imperialists had, in the commencement of the assault, fired the town in several places. A tempest now arose, which spread the flames with frightful rapidity through the town, till the blaze became universal. The confusion was deepened by the clouds of smoke,

the heaps of dead bodies that strewed the ground, the clash of swords, the crash of falling ruins, and the streams of blood which ran along the streets. The atmosphere glowed, and the intolerable heat at last compelled even the murderers to take refuge in their camp. In less than twelve hours, this strong, populous, and flourishing city, one of the finest in Germany, was a heap of ashes, with the exception of two churches and a few houses. The administrator, Christian William, after receiving several wounds, was taken prisoner, with three of the burgomasters: most of the officers and magistrates had already met an enviable death. The avarice of the officers had saved four hundred of the richest citizens from death, in hope of extorting from them an exorbitant ransom. This piece of humanity was owing principally to the officers of the League; and even this questionable clemency, when contrasted with the blind and ruthless butchery of the Austrians, made them be regarded as guardian angels by the citizens.

“Scarcely had the flames abated, when the imperial soldiers returned to satiate anew their rage for plunder amidst the ruins and ashes of the town. Many were suffocated by the smoke; many found rich booty in the cellars, where the citizens had concealed their valuable effects. On the 13th of May, Tilly himself appeared in the town, after the streets had been cleared of ashes and corpses. Horrible and revolting to humanity was the scene that presented itself—the living crawling from under the dead, children wandering about with heart-rending cries, seeking their parents, and infants still sucking the dead bodies of their mothers. More than five thousand bodies were thrown into the Elbe, to clear the streets; a much greater number had been consumed by the flames. The entire amount of the slaughter was calculated at thirty thousand.”

THE SUFFERINGS OF WAR DEMAND MORE ATTENTION AND SYMPATHY.

It has been our object, in the extracts which have been made, not to give a general idea of the miseries of war, but, in particular, to free the mind from that illusion, to which it is so liable to be subject, when it contemplates things in the mass, and is either too indolent or too little interested to look into their elements. Well does the author of *Recollections of the Peninsula* say, “When the history of an individual, who has fallen, is brought before us, we feel deeply, but wander over ground covered with corpses, about whom we know nothing,

with comparative indifference; yet, if we knew the history attached to each lifeless body on which we gazed, with what tales of sorrow should we not become acquainted!"

In this very writer, who was himself an officer in the English army of the Peninsula, and who seems to have been sufficiently partial to a soldier's life, we have a number of affecting instances fully illustrative of this just remark. What recompense had the pomp and splendor of military life to that wretched captain of the 26th regiment, who, dreadfully lacerated by a ball, lay directly in the path of his comrades, and, with a heart-rending accent of grief, cried for water, or that they would kill him; but no one regarded his request? What consolation had the glitter of an epaulet and the sound of the spirit-stirring fife for that mangled and lifeless youth, not yet eighteen years of age, the darling child of a fond mother, who mourned in brokenness of heart on the banks of the murmuring and peaceful Loire? What balm was it in the power of earth to furnish to that miserable man, who coming upon the field of Victoria, and inquiring for his two sons, the only remains of his beloved family, found them both dead? Who can measure the misery of that native of Arragon, who had himself been wounded in the field of battle, who had seen his mother dying of grief, his wife brutally dishonored and perishing in a hospital, his cottage burnt, and his father led out and shot in the market-place of his native village? It is not enough, when we hear of twenty or thirty thousand slain on the field of battle, to heave a sentimental sigh, or to utter an unmeaning ejaculation of astonishment. Such an occasion is one, if we mistake not, which requires real astonishment, real sorrow, deep reflection, anxious inquiry, the exercise of the benevolent sympathies, and unfeigned humiliation before God.

It is impossible to repress the desire we feel that men generally, particularly those who profess to be guided by the principles of the gospel, should look this great subject fearlessly in the face, not only in its outlines, but its details. With but few exceptions, it is certainly not too much to say that they have never done it as yet. Let it not for a moment be supposed that we can excuse ourselves in this important inquiry; that we can step aside, and leave it to others; that we have personally nothing to do, no responsibility to meet, no opinion to express, no warning to utter. The poet Cowper has somewhere said that he would not reckon in the list of friends the

man who should needlessly set foot upon a worm ; and it will not be denied that this language is expressive of a disposition which promptly commends itself to the just and benevolent feelings of our nature. Yes, it is beyond all question that, as men, as creatures of God, we are to be sparing even of the blood of a brute animal, of the life even of an insect. And what shall we say, then, when we steadily contemplate the scenes which have now been laid open before us ; when we see, not mere worms and insects destroyed, but human beings ; men, created in our own likeness, horribly mangled and torn to pieces ; in some cases, thousands of acres of ground covered with piles of dead ; women and children pierced through, and dashed down, and trodden into the dust ; the wounded left to perish on bleak snows, or burnt to death in their own hospitals ; multitudes frozen with the cold and perishing with famine ; every possible form and degree of agony and despair ? Can we be deemed unreasonable in saying that this is a state of things which must be met, must be looked into ? that it is high time for philosophers, for politicians, above all for professed Christians, to scrutinize it with the deepest solicitude ? Shall the attention of the whole scientific and intellectual world be directed to the comparatively trifling circumstance of the discovery of a new plant, to the fall of a meteoric stone, or to some atmospheric phenomenon,—and shall war, that great moral phenomenon, so inexplicable as to strike angels with astonishment, and to fill even the spirits of darkness with wonder, be deemed of so little consequence as to arrest no thought, excite no feeling, and secure no spirit of inquiry ?

NATIONAL HONOR A PLEA FOR WAR.

BY HON. WILLIAM JAY.

A cause frequently assigned in justification of war is the preservation of national honor : one party demands a concession as due to his honor, and the other refuses it as inconsistent with his, and thus the work of slaughter commences for a sentiment—for the preservation of a character which probably neither merits nor possesses.

Sir Robert Peel, the present Premier of Great Britain, in a late speech to his constituents remarked, “ I do hope that neither this country nor the United States will be *mad* enough to allow a difference of opinion about a boundary to set them